

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3971

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 1383

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, PFOR, PE, CU

SUBJECT: CUBAN INTEREST IN PURCHASING GENERAL MOTORS
TRUCKS FOR MINING INDUSTRY

1. CUBAN COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR IN LIMA, JULIO MARQUEZ ARNER, HAS INFORMED EMBASSY OFFICER WITH WHOM HE HAS BECOME ACQUAINTED OF CUBAN GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN PURCHASING 135 GENERAL MOTORS TRUCKS MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES. MARQUEZ DESCRIBED TRUCK AS GMC MODEL DH 9732, 6X4 CHASSIS WITH ALUMINUM TILT CAB, 74 INCH BBC (ASTRO 95), L.H.D., PER UNIT COST ABOUT \$35,000. CUBANS ALSO WANT SEVEN YEAR PARTS GUARANTEE.

2. MARQUEZ SAID CUBAN PRIME MINISTER CASTRO IS PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN THESE VEHICLES, AND MARQUEZ HAS AUTHORITY TO BYPASS NORMAL CUBAN COMMERCE MINISTRY CHANNELS IN NEGOTIATING TRANSACTION. MARQUEZ SAID THE TRUCKS WOULD BE USED IN THE CUBAN MINING INDUSTRY AND ARE OF INTEREST TO CUBAN GOVERNMENT BECAUSE THEY HAVE RELIABLE AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION WHICH COMPETITORS HAVE SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO MATCH.

3. ACCORDING TO MARQUEZ, TRUCKS WERE PART OF LARGER ORDER ORIGINALLY DESTINED FOR ZAIRE, BUT FOR SOME REASON THEY WERE NEVER SHIPPED AND ARE CURRENTLY STORED IN GM
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FACILITY IN VIRGINIA. MARQUEZ RECEIVED A QUOTATION ON

THE TRUCKS FROM DIESEL DEL PERU, WHICH REPORTEDLY HANDLES SOME GM DIESEL PRODUCTS IN LIMA. SUBSEQUENTLY, HOWEVER, THE FIRM'S REPRESENTATIVE INFORMED MARQUEZ THAT THE COMPANY COULD NOT MAKE THE SALE.

4. EMBASSY FULLY REALIZES IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A TRANSACTION AND RECOGNIZES THAT IT WOULD BE PROHIBITED UNDER EXISTING U.S. REGULATIONS. HOWEVER, WHILE MARQUEZ' APPROACH MUST UNDOUBTEDLY BE VIEWED AS A PROBE OF U.S. TRADE POLICY VIS-A-VIS CUBA, WE ALSO HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE REQUEST IS A SERIOUS ONE WHICH IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD HVE A GOOD CHANCE OF LEADING TO A SALE OF SOME \$4.7 MILLION. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW MOST APPROPRIATELY TO REPLY TO THIS CUBAN INITIATIVE.
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